

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

OCTOBER 1940

DOCUMENTARY—THE CREATIVE INTERPRETATION OF REALITY

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Government Cinematograph Adviser

IN THEIR REPORT the Select Committee on National Expenditure records that the experience of the Government Cinematograph Adviser was freely used both in the pre-war planning of the Films Division of the M.O.I. and in the subsequent work of the Division up to the end of December. Since then, and contrary to Treasury instruction, the Sub-Committee reports that he has not been consulted. Commenting upon this an *Evening News* correspondent states:—

"The man whom the Film Section is advised to consult before embarking on future film production is Mr. J. G. Hughes Roberts, a Stationery Office official. He is at present 'seconded' to the Film Section. Soon after the end of the last war the War Office discovered, with some alarm, that it had in its Whitehall cellars many miles of highly-inflammable film, taken on the various battle fronts. No one knew how to keep

films safely, so that it was with a good deal of relief that an ex-Salvage Corps officer, Mr. Foxen Cooper, was found in the Stationery Office. He at least knew how to put out fires, and he became custodian of the nation's official films. With enterprise he developed his new charge until he became the Government's film librarian. So it happened that whenever any professional producer wanted to borrow a bit of old war film for incorporation in a new picture, Mr. Foxen Cooper was the oracle who decided for or against permission to borrow the old celluloid. Inevitably, he was consulted on all Whitehall's film problems, and the post of Government Cinematograph Adviser was perpetuated by Mr. Hughes Roberts' succession to Mr. Foxen Cooper. This is the only explanation, I am told by leaders of the film industry, for the peculiar situation of a Stationery Office official being an expert on film matters."

Lines behind the lines

THE Cunard White Star Line and the railways appear to have lost all initiative as far as films are concerned. FILM NEWS, published by American Film Center, lists 54 films belonging to these two groups—mostly of the British countryside—that have been withdrawn from circulation in the United States for the duration of the war. This can only appear as defeatism to our friends in the U.S.A. Fortunately, the technical quality and entertainment value of the films concerned are in most cases of a low order.

In spite of this backsliding on the part of two great commercial enterprises, a large number of other British films is available from various sources such as the Museum of Modern Art, Universities, the Travel and Industrial Development Association and the Y.M.C.A. Though the lists include a number of films which might well be withdrawn owing to the fact that they are out of date, or technically poor, or both, the general level of interest is high. It is most gratifying to find 46 G.B.I. films listed with the others.

Documentary Roués

A CURIOUS error was made by the London correspondent of

the *Manchester Guardian* dated September 7th. In referring to the Select Committee's Report, he alleged that one of the factors which is weakening the Films Division of the M.O.I. is "the gradual dissipation of the British School of Documentary Film-Makers". The word "dissipation" conjures up a pleasing vision of Pompeian orgies in the vicinity of Soho Square, but presumably the writer of the paragraph is really suggesting that the documentary units are beginning to break up and collapse. However, our trained investigators, after careful scrutiny of buildings, apparatus and personnel, report that everything is going along as usual. The documentary movement has always been sensibly fluid as regards interchange of key-men and of ideas; and the *Manchester Guardian's* correspondent should be able to distinguish between chaos and the Heraclitan theory.

Time

WE HOPE that DNL subscribers will realise that under present conditions we cannot guarantee delivery on the first of the month. Every effort is being made to achieve punctuality.

RUBY GRIERSON

On September 17th the liner "City of Benares", carrying children to Canada, was torpedoed. As well as the children and their escorts it carried down with it the best-loved member of the Documentary Film Movement. It was no chance that Ruby Grierson was chosen to make the official film of evacuation by sea; her gift for handling people, and especially children, was one of the most notable of her many qualities. She came to documentary from school-teaching, and rapidly proved herself as one of the most promising recruits the movement had ever had. Her co-direction of "To-day We Live" established her as one of those few directors whose passionate sympathy with the life and spirit of ordinary people has formed the real main artery of documentary progress. There is no need to give a bare list of her films; it is perhaps more important to remember the qualities which she so often added to the films of others. No one would deny her much of the credit for "Housing Problems", "The Londoners", and many of the Strand films on the Zoo. But the loss of a fine film director is as nothing compared with the personal loss to each one of us. Only in memory can we recapture her good temper and her good humour, her fierce enthusiasms and her physical and spiritual energies. In the temperamental world of documentary film makers, she stood for more than level-headedness; she kept the basic ideals of this type of film making always to the front, and she was called in on many occasions of difficulty or doubt. Her personal companionship, too, was sought by all, and the many evenings spent in the hospitality of her home gave to documentary a common domestic hearth. It is but small comfort to realise that she died among children, whom she always loved and understood. To all of us her loss is greater than words can measure. But she leaves us more than a memory: she leaves an influence and a spirit which will stay as long as we go on trying to use films as an instrument for good.

FROM THE G.P.O. FILM UNIT

Although Ruby Grierson never worked at the G.P.O. Film Unit, we all looked upon her as one of us. It was her spirit and enthusiasm that we liked so much. In our world, where we seem to be half politicians and half film-makers Ruby was one of the few who never wavered from her principles. She would screw up her face and say fiercely: "You can't do it, you can't do it. It's not pure", and seeing her pluck and determination, you were heartened and realised that what you were trying to do in documentary was worth while after all.

In her work she had the unerring sympathy of the intuitive woman. Her films were full of that real humanity that is the most difficult of all qualities to put on the screen. Her handling of women and children was superb. And her last film, "They Also Serve", a simple story of the day in the life of a working woman, gave promise that perhaps from her could have come the drama of the people that we all hope documentary will make one day. It'll still be made, but not as Ruby Grierson might have made it.

M.O.I. UNDER FIRE

An analysis of the report of the SELECT COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL EXPENDITURE on the Films Division of the M.O.I.

Excerpts are quoted by permission of the Controller, H.M.S.O.

REACTIONARIES posing as guardians of the public purse will undoubtedly be able to use this Report to justify inaction. For any such report, containing even a mild and partial criticism of public expenditure on a new enterprise, can be distorted into an argument for a *laissez-faire* policy. It is essential therefore to discover whether the Report produces any serious evidence for condemning the officially sponsored film as an instrument to express the problems and spirit of the nation.

The second of the thirteen recommendations reads—

"The Films Division should not in future assume direct responsibility for the production of feature films by the provision of public money."

Recommendation (8) reads—

"No further commitments should be entered into in connection with the proposed scheme of non-theatrical display, unless very clear evidence is obtained from experience that it is making a contribution to the war effort commensurate with the expenditure."

When we examine the body of the Report for the evidence on which these two recommendations are based it is found to be contradictory.

Under the heading "Feature films" we are told: "The wide distribution secured by commercial feature films gives excellent opportunities for disseminating, if not direct propaganda, an impression of the British attitude both to the issues of the war and to wartime conditions." Without enlarging upon this curious distinction between "direct propaganda" and "an impression of the British attitude both to the issues of the war and to wartime conditions", the Report goes on to explain the advantage of saving public money by encouraging commercial producers to produce feature films of national value with their own finance. Yet three paragraphs later we are told of "a number of cases in which commercial producers made films which they thought were excellent propaganda but which in the opinion of the Ministry were disastrous and were calculated to have precisely the effect which the Ministry did not desire." Still undeterred, the Report plunges on—"Day to day interference by the Ministry in the affairs of commercial producers is to be deprecated . . . they should be allowed to choose their own themes and develop them in their own way."

Here is a tangle of arguments which would baffle anyone except a Parliamentary Committeeman. But the Sub-Committee has a time-honoured solution—

"The way to make sure that they [the commercial producers] regard it as a duty not to run counter to the Ministry's line of propaganda is to achieve close, friendly and mutually acceptable working arrangements between the two parties to that end."

It may well be true that Government-sponsored feature films are an unsound speculation with other quicker and cheaper channels of film propaganda available, yet the case here is not

proved and the ban which the Report attempts to put on such films must not be allowed to prevent future consideration of feature films as a means of public expression under the control of the community.

There is a danger that the Sub-Committee's determination to restrict itself throughout the Report to short-term considerations may inhibit long-term planning after the war as well as now. This may perhaps be regarded as a point of secondary importance at this stage in the war, but the Sub-Committee's conception of the meaning of "long-term" and "short-term" is such that urgent propaganda needs of the moment are dismissed on the ground that they have no immediate importance. This is particularly true in the case of the non-theatrical scheme for documentary distribution which is criticised by the Report in the second of the recommendations quoted above. This scheme, on which the Ministry of Information originally proposed to spend £172,000 in twelve months provides for the production of special films described as "instructional and explanatory". "They will include films with a special wartime significance, such as films on cooking and salvage, and also films of a more general character showing the contribution of the Empire to the war effort." This Ministry of Information project aims at reaching an audience, inaccessible through the channel of the ordinary cinema programme, to the total number of one million a week.

The Sub-Committee's view of the scheme is as follows: "That it could play some part in a scheme of national propaganda cannot be doubted, if cost be ignored. Much of the usefulness of such a scheme, however, would appear to be as a means of general education. However desirable this may be in time of peace, the Sub-Committee find it difficult to justify such expenditure in time of war, and they regard the cost of reaching an audience of one million a week by this method as out of all proportion to the cost of films shown in cinemas which are estimated to reach an audience fifteen or twenty times as great."

These objections are plain nonsense. It is difficult to see how films "with a special wartime significance, such as films on cooking and salvage, and also films of a more general character showing the contribution of the Empire to the war effort", may be desirable in time of peace but too expensive in time of war. Such a glaring *non-sequitur* is startling evidence of muddled thinking. It is equally unreasonable to complain of the expense of giving a special propaganda message to a special audience on the ground that it would be cheaper to give a different message to a different audience.

It is difficult to believe that the real objections of the Sub-Committee to the non-theatrical scheme are those which it chooses to emphasise. A clue to the true basis of its anxiety may be found in a tendency (revealed at several points in the Report) to discourage initiative and to direct the energies of

the Films Division out of new channels into old ones. The non-theatrical scheme which displeases the Sub-Committee because much of its usefulness "would appear to be as a means of general education" is suspect because it is big, bold and new; moreover, since it is not similar to anything being done by the feature film producers, the newsreel companies, the British Council, the Film Institute, or the Government Cinematograph Adviser it cannot be handed over to any of them; for it would appear to be the desire of the Sub-Committee to distribute the Films Division's responsibilities elsewhere. Being unable to do so in this case, the Sub-Committee has to content itself with rapping the Films Division over the knuckles for one of its few displays of initiative during the period covered by the Report.

In considering the documentary film for theatrical distribution the Sub-Committee is equally uneasy. "The documentary film, the film of an instructional or informative character, has very serious limitations as a means of propaganda in time of war. The first of these lies in the fact that a full-length documentary, though not indeed so laborious an undertaking as a feature film, may require several months for its production and may become out of date before it is completed." Moreover the Report finds the extent and speed of distribution of the theatrical documentary unsatisfactory in wartime. "A documentary film marketed in the ordinary way, may reach about 1,500 cinemas out of a total 4,500 cinemas in the country in the course of one and a half to two years. . . . In time of peace this result is satisfactory. In wartime and for the purposes of propaganda this arrangement has the two-fold defect that the message is conveyed to the public too slowly and never reaches the greater part of it at all."

This completes the Report's list of "very serious limitations" of the documentary film as wartime propaganda. The reader, seeing that the criticism of slowness in production applies particularly to the "full-length documentary", will search for references to the propaganda performance of short documentaries which are, after all, the commonest kind. He will search in vain. In spite of the fact that since the outbreak of war several short documentaries have been completed for the Ministry of Information in seven days, the Report does not acknowledge the existence of the short documentary. To compensate for the omission the Sub-Committee has discovered and reported a new kind of film. This is the five-minute film (in some cases running longer than its name). It is acknowledged that in the case of these films the Films Division has overcome not only the problem of production speed but also the problem of distribution referred to above. They are distributed free, and within a month of completion, to every cinema in the country. The reader may well ask whether the "very serious limitations" of the documentary film might not be similarly overcome. If he has seen some of the five-minute films he may even ask whether, in many cases, they are nothing more or less than short documentaries. But for the purposes of the Report, documentaries can only be "full-length".

In reporting the past failures and inadequacies of the Films Division in the documentary as well as other fields the Report fails to distinguish between faults inherent in the propaganda

media and faults in the ways in which those media have been used. We learn that while in the period September, 1939, to June, 1940, 49 documentary films had been completed or were in production, 17 films "had for various reasons to be abandoned". To have recorded these various reasons might have proved embarrassing but it is to be hoped nevertheless that they were thoroughly investigated by the Sub-Committee. In that case it would have been revealed that almost always the subjects chosen either would have been rejected at the start by any competent propagandist or, they formed no part of any considered programme of propaganda or information. Indeed, many producers employed by the Films Division protested against the subjects allotted to them on these grounds.

The Sub-Committee is admirably conscious of the essential importance of relating subject-matter of films to a co-ordinated policy. A great deal of the Report is devoted to showing how "the work of the Films Division in the Home field has been largely ineffective through the lack of clearly defined objectives on the part of the Ministry". The solution to the problem is expressed as follows—"The Sub-Committee consider that it is the duty of the Films Division in the interests of economy and efficiency to demand precise directions from the Home Intelligence Branch before embarking upon any programme of films in this country". Later in the Report the Sub-Committee takes pity on the Home Intelligence Branch and spreads wider the responsibility for issuing precise directions to the Films Division. Directions are to come "from within the Ministry or from another Department of the Government". The Films Division may be forgiven if it despairs, finding itself bereft of all responsibility save for the task of conducting a wild goose chase after instructions.

Nevertheless the Films Division may take heart. Fortunately it need not even fall back on the Sub-Committee's one wild polysyllabic guess at the wartime function of the film, which it describes as a means to "break down the psychological barriers to the fulfilment of particular national requirements". The Films Division may take heart from the simple fact that the newspapers appear every morning undirected by any Government Department and contrive nevertheless to record the progress of the war and to instruct and enhearten the public by the simple process of giving information. The Sub-Committee appears, in writing its report, to have overlooked the possibility that there was a reason for calling the Ministry with which it deals not the Ministry of Morale, but the Ministry of Information. Information is the key to morale. And there is no mystery, no difficulty in imparting information by film: information to tell the people what is happening, what they must do, how and why they must do it. Even information for the Government, which will instruct and enlighten them with news of what the people are thinking and saying and doing and what the people are telling the Government to do.

There is no difficulty about it. But it is necessary first to forget the timid toe-wetting investigation of propaganda and films undertaken in this Sub-Committee's report. It is necessary to forget such silly assertions as that "it is difficult to relate the contents of documentary films to precise and transient needs". A few visits to the cinema will restore sanity.

NON-THEATRICAL

An Analysis of the M.O.I. Non-Theatrical Schemes, after modification to meet the criticisms reported in the preceding article.

THE FILMS DIVISION of the M.O.I. has this month published the most comprehensive plans for the non-theatrical circulation of films that this country has ever had. This news is the more welcome since at one time there were signs that non-theatrical distribution might be allowed to go by default. At the beginning of the war, the excellent G.P.O. road-show service was abandoned for no better reason, apparently, than that the Films Division as then constituted had neither the imagination nor the wit to see that an essential means of communication between Government Departments and the people they served was being jettisoned. Just as the present plans for non-theatrical distribution were being completed, yet another influence threatened them. On August 21st, the *Select Committee on National Expenditure* published its report on the Films Division, which roundly condemned the non-theatrical scheme, principally on the grounds that it had a strong educational flavour, the Committee holding that education is not a fit activity to encourage in wartime. Fortunately the report was so inept as a whole that the Films Division has evidently felt justified in going ahead without paying much attention to it, though some modifications have been introduced to meet the Committee's objection to too high expenditure.

The non-theatrical plans examined by the Select Committee were as follows:—

- (1) A rural scheme for 65 projectors and cars, to be hired by the M.O.I.
- (2) An urban scheme for 50 projectors and cars, to be purchased by the M.O.I.
- (3) A loan scheme for 100 projectors, to be purchased by the M.O.I. and loaned, half to public libraries and half to national organisations.
- (4) A scheme to hire public cinemas outside ordinary programme times.

Excluding the production of films specially designed for non-theatrical use, the cost was estimated at £172,000, the audience at almost one million a week.

The modified plans show a saving of £42,000. The rural scheme has been dropped, but the urban scheme has been widened into a regional scheme with 76 mobile projectors instead of 50. These will serve not only the towns but rural areas as well. In towns the programmes will generally be designed to link up with propaganda campaigns undertaken by the M.O.I. or other Ministries. In the country, particularly in

those districts not served by a public cinema, the programme will be lighter, and not confined to propaganda and instruction.

The loan scheme of projectors has been cut from 100 projectors to 50, and these will be put at the disposal of local authorities. They will usually be placed in public libraries, and this is perhaps the most novel part of the whole scheme, for it is a first step to providing "citizen's cinemas" devoted to public instruction and information. The public libraries will become community centres where groups can see programmes of films specially selected to meet their particular interests or needs. In addition, public cinemas will be hired in the mornings and programmes screened of films of particular interest to housewives.

One very important part of the plan did not apparently come under the scrutiny of the Select Committee. A Central Film Library has been set up to amalgamate the G.P.O. Film Library and the Empire Film Library, and to supply prints free on loan to approved borrowers owning their own projectors. Thus, for the first time this country finds itself with a centralised film library which one hopes will absorb all the other free libraries, so that borrowers will no longer have to get their films from half a dozen different sources. It is to be hoped, too, that the Film Institute, at present outside the scheme, will be drawn in. Its service of reviews, not only of educational films, but of feature films, must come within the scope of the Central Film Library. So, too, should the Institute's invaluable service of instruction on how to purchase and handle projectors. The other principal part of the Institute's work is cultural, the collection and preservation of films of cultural and historical interest. This function, too, might well be added to the Central Film Library.

The Films Division has not confined itself to planning distribution alone; provision has been made either to acquire or to produce films to meet the needs of the various services. The Central Film Library will presumably be stocked from the films already held by the G.P.O. and Empire Film Libraries, and other films will be added as opportunity allows. The Regional and Public Library services will be supplied with films from three sources—suitable films acquired by the M.O.I. from outside sources, such as the Gas Industry films on wartime cookery and *Men of Africa*; films commissioned by the M.O.I. itself during the past year on various occasions for various reasons, including some "five-minute" films; and a series of 21 films commissioned in July and specially designed for the service. All three classes of films are included in the lists appearing on pages 14 and 15 of this issue.

DOCUMENTARY BOOKINGS FOR OCTOBER

(The following bookings for October are selected from a list covering its Members, supplied by The News and Specialised Theatres Association.)

Alice in Switzerland News Theatre, Leeds	26th	March of Time No. 3, 6th year (America's Youth) Topical News Cinema, Diamond Street, Aberdeen	30th (Sept.) 30th (Sept.)
Apes & Monkeys Tatler News Theatre, Birmingham News Theatre, Leeds Tatler, Manchester	19th 19th 5th	The News House, Nottingham	
Babes in the Wood News Theatre, High Street, Birmingham	12th	March of Time No. 4, 6th year (The U.S. Navy) Tatler Theatre, Manchester The News House, Newcastle-on-Tyne The News House, Nottingham	14th 14th 21st
Black Nugget News House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	12th	Men of the Lightship News Theatre, High Street, Birmingham	5th
Bridge Across the Skies Tatler Theatre, Chester	5th	Michael Flaherty News Theatre, Leeds	19th
Bringing It Home Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	12th	Netherlands Old and New News House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	19th
Complot Angler The News House, Nottingham	26th	New Hampshire News Theatre, High Street, Birmingham News Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	12th 12th 5th
Delhi News House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle News Theatre, Bristol Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle Tatler Theatre, Chester Tatler, Manchester	5th 12th 12th 26th 19th	Old Blue Tatler Theatre, Chester	19th
Devils of the Ocean Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	12th	Rocking through the Rockies The Tatler, Leeds	19th
Ducks and Drakes The News House, Nottingham	12th	Sacred Ganges The News Theatre, Bristol	19th
Dundee The News Theatre, Leeds	12th	Secrets of Coco Islands Topical News Cinema, Aberdeen	12th
Face of Shanghai News House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	5th	Skygame Tatler, Manchester Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	12th 5th
Fear and Peter Brown Tatler Theatre, Chester News Theatre, Leeds Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	26th 12th 26th	South Africa The News House, Nottingham	19th
Fitness Wins No. 7 News Theatre, Leeds Tatler, Manchester	26th 26th	Sport at the Local Tatler Theatre, Chester	12th
Flying Stewardess The News Theatre, Bristol	19th	Stranger than Fiction The News House, Nottingham	26th
Forty Million People Topical News Cinema, Aberdeen	5th	Sword Fishing Tatler Theatre, Chester News Theatre, Leeds Tatler, Manchester	12th 26th 19th
Four and Twenty Fit Girls News House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	26th	Television Preview Tatler News Theatre, Birmingham News Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester	12th 26th
Freaks of the Deep News Theatre, High Street, Birmingham	26th	The Big Fish News House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	19th
Ghost Island Topical News Cinema, Aberdeen	26th	The Fox Hunt Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	5th
Going Places No. 74 Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	19th	The Lion Hunter Tatler, Manchester	12th
Jutland Holiday Tatler, Manchester	12th	The Tiger Hunt The News House, Nottingham	12th
Last of the Windjammers Tatler News Theatre, Birmingham	12th	The Volcano News House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	26th
Life Begins for Andy Pandey Tatler Theatre, Chester	26th	The Whalers Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	26th
Lovely Wales Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	26th	Twinkling Fingers Tatler News Theatre, Birmingham	19th
		Unconquerable Minesweepers News Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester	5th
		Unveiling Algeria News House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle	26th
		Valiant Venezuela Tatler Theatre, Chester	5th
		Washington Parade No. 6 News Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester	19th
		West of Inverness Topical News Cinema, Aberdeen	12th
		Winter Playground News Theatre, High Street, Birmingham	19th
		Within a City News Theatre, Leeds Tatler, Manchester	5th 5th
		Young Animals Tatler, Manchester	26th
		Zoo in Wartime The News House, Nottingham	19th
		Zoo's Zoo The News House, Nottingham	5th

CORRESPONDENCE

SIR: All who are interested in the non-theatrical distribution of films will be grateful to you for the paragraph on "Damage to Film" in your August issue.

This is a problem which deserves more attention than it generally receives. In the past, facilities for learning the technique of sub-standard projection have been offered by a number of vacation courses and refresher courses. The war, however, has led to a temporary suspension of such gatherings. While the subject is, of course, primarily one where "practice makes perfect" the tyro-projectionist may find that a little reading-up of the subject beforehand saves him both anxiety and expense. It has at any rate been with this object in view that our pamphlet on *Using School Projectors* (post free 1s. 2d. from the British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.) has been compiled.

H. D. WALEY,
Technical Director,
British Film Institute

SIR: The need for instructional films in the Army is more than crying. There must be hundreds of training battalions like this one and I expect they all use the same flint-axe methods. Half of the instructors seem barely to understand what they are talking about themselves, and most of the others could not express themselves more obscurely if they had cleft palates. A course which deals with the parts and maintenance of the lorry could be perfectly covered by three or four films of the *Transfer of Power or Lubrication of the Petrol Engine* type. The mechanism of the Lewis gun, which remains forever a sacred mystery to most soldiers, would also respond to similar treatment. Field training and foot drill—in fact, everything we are taught, could be taught quicker and more thoroughly by films. The reason is, I suppose, that the authorities still think they are dealing with a regular army of enlisted professional soldiers, instead of a heterogeneous bunch of men conscripted cross-sectionally from every group, denomination, bracket and class in the country.

(Signed) DOCUMENTARY
Somewhere in England. (In the Army)

A DECADE IN THE SERVICE OF DOCUMENTARY

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NEWS FROM CANADA

THE FIRST YEAR of the National Film Board's activities closes with some forty pictures either in distribution, on the stocks, or in script preparation. On the war side, the sixth film in the monthly series, *Canada Carries On*, was released on September 16th. Its subject is the Commonwealth Air Training Plan—the vast scheme being undertaken jointly by Canada, Australia and New Zealand to supply 35,000 airmen a year for Commonwealth defence. The film is a two-reeler (an unusual length in Canadian theatres where ten minutes is the normal maximum for a short) and promises to be as good-looking a picture as has yet come out of Canada. Raymond Spottiswoode (Audio Pictures, Toronto) directed, with Roger Barlow, an experienced air photographer, as associate director and cameraman. The theme of the film is that flying is the last stronghold of individualism in a world of mass operation; and that Canadians, by reason of their country's long tradition of the "bush pilot"—the lonely, pioneer flyer relying on his air-sense as much as on his instruments—are specially well fitted to that individual capacity and initiative needed in war flying.

Beyond the air-film—to be titled *Wings of Youth*—five further films in the series are in production or lined up. They are:—

1. **Refugee Children.** This film will cover all phases of the evacuation of children from the time they leave the U.K. to the time they settle down in their new Canadian homes. Material of the arrival of children at "an Eastern Canadian port" has already been shot by Associated Screen News: the children were interviewed on their first reactions to Canada, on what England was like in its warpaint, and on what they would do on meeting their first Red Indian. They then gave a massed singing of "There'll Always be an England" for the benefit of the cameras. The following story is told by the cameraman: In the train carrying the children inland from the port of debarkation, a group of kids from Manchester stretched a rope across the corridor, preventing passage in either direction. Canadian passengers wishing to get to the dining car were forced to pay a toll in order to pass the rope. On being asked what the idea was, the children replied: "We understand that in Canada you've got to have a racket. This is our racket. Five cents, please." There seems little doubt that with material of this kind available, the film will be pretty good. (Ruby Grierson was shooting material for this film when she lost her life on the torpedoed liner).
2. A film on the swift growth of the Canadian navy since the outbreak of the war. Associate Producer will be Lieut. John Farrow, late director for R.K.O., and now with the Naval Intelligence Service in Ottawa.

3. Two intimate, human films on the life of a recruit in the Canadian army. One film will be made at Camp Borden, a big training centre for English-speaking men in Ontario, and the other at Valcartier, the largest camp in French-speaking Quebec. The films will be shot and released simultaneously, but will be entirely separate in their scripting and production. The Valcartier film will be the first all-French subject made specifically for release in French Canada.

4. Morley Callaghan, Canadian writer and playwright more celebrated in the U.S. than in his own country, recently wrote dialogue and narrative for Irvin Jacoby's ice hockey film. Becoming interested in films, Callaghan is now working on the script of a picture for the war series provisionally entitled *This is My Country*. Object of the film will be to articulate the average Canadian's thoughts about himself, his neighbours and his country in such a way as to provide a positive reply for the democratic way of life to the Nazi challenge.

Squadron 992, slightly shortened in length and with a new opening and ending to bring it up to date and to give it Canadian reference, began its theatre career here on August 21. First reports are that it is doing well, and that the jokes, in spite of the Scottish dialect, are understood and appreciated.

During last spring Radford Crawley, a well-known Canadian amateur film maker, made considerable experiments in production on 16 mm. Kodachrome colour. One of the results was *Four New Apple Dishes*, a one-reel film on apple cookery for women's groups. Another was the discovery of a fast, cheap and high-standard method of production for the non-theatrical field, having the novelty of colour and the advantages of simple post-synched sound (usually commentary and music).

The Film Board has now embarked on a big programme of 16 mm. colour films to be shot silent during late summer and autumn, and edited and synchronised through the winter months when exterior production is rendered difficult by adverse weather and sub-zero temperatures.

The subjects include:—

1. Ottawa.
2. Duck Hunting.
3. Moose Hunting.
4. The Canadian Autumn.
(these for tourist purposes).
5. The Peace River (the last great agricultural frontier in the North West).
6. The shipping of the Great Lakes.
7. The Icelandic community in Manitoba.

Other subjects are under consideration. Already acquired by the Board as a lead-off for

the series are five existing colour-films on Canadian wild flowers, Canadian birds, handicrafts of Quebec, hydro-electric power and horticulture. The production programme is largely in the charge of Radford Crawley, who is using the opportunities present to train apprentices in the elements of shooting and editing.

The National Film Board has acquired the Canadian rights of Herbert Kline's film *Lights Out in Europe*. Retitled *Not Peace but a Sword*, it is having its Canadian première at a big open-air theatre on the grounds of the National Exhibition at Toronto. Alexander Korda has presented the Board with the non-theatrical rights of *The Lion Has Wings*. These two films, together with the N.F.B.'s own survey of the first year of war, *On Guard for Thee*, are being released immediately for wide non-theatrical circulation across the country.

FROM U.S.A.

THE British Government has accepted an invitation to establish a British Section of International Film Center on an experimental basis. This Section, which is under the control of International Film Center, will co-operate in bringing to the U.S.A., and making available for general distribution, British films of educational value. Mr Richard Ford, lately attached to the Odeon circuit in Britain in connection with Oscar Deutch's educational schemes, has been appointed to take charge of the British Section.

International Film Center has been instrumental in bringing to the U.S.A. films from Finland, Holland, Britain, Canada, and the Latin-American Republics, and has sent selected American films of educational value all over the world.

FROM AUSTRALIA

THE GROWING use of motion pictures for advertising, educational, documentary and religious purposes is indicated by the sharp increase in imports of sub-standard (mainly 16 mm.) films from 633 in 1935 to 1,189 in 1937 and 1,935 in 1938. Most of these films came from the United States.

Visual education has made substantial progress in Australia where the Education Departments of the respective States encourage the use of films in state schools. In New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia the Governments do not bear any part of the cost of the projectors, the purchases being made with funds supplied in most cases by Parents' and Citizens' Associations. However, in South Australia and Tasmania, the Governments contribute one-third of the cost of the projectors. At the beginning of 1938 there were 170 state schools in South Australia equipped with projectors, and in Tasmania, 74. In New South Wales there were only 21, and in Victoria, 50.

NON-THEATRICAL PRODUCTION BY THE M.O.I.

All the films reviewed on this and the next pages were specially commissioned by the M.O.I. for the new non-theatrical programme described on page 5. Each film runs for about ten minutes, and the whole scheme at present comprises 21 films. The venture represents the most important advance in the social use of cinema by the Government that this country has ever seen.

Religion and the People. Production: British Films Ltd. Associate Producer: Arthur Elton. Director: Andrew Buchanan.

Religion and the People shows how various creeds—Church of England, Roman Catholic, Free Church and Jewish—can flourish under a democracy. Unshackled by arbitrary rules from secular authority in Britain, religion is a matter of individual conscience. The film touches pleasantly enough, but not very profoundly, on the work these four religious groups are doing to maintain the physical and spiritual needs of their congregations. An unusual feature of the film are the scenes inside the Great Synagogue which can rarely have been seen before, and which are beautifully photographed and composed.

Six Foods for Fitness. Production: Realist Film Unit. Associate Producer: Basil Wright. Director: Ruby Grierson.

THE HOME FRONT is as much a part of the war effort as the battle front; civilians are the soldiers of modern war. It is only if the civilians play their part and keep up their strength that the war can be won. The main object of the film is to make everyone understand the importance of eating foods which are easily available in wartime and to persuade them to eat the right foods. The shape of the film is built round the repetition, visually and in words: milk, cheese, fish, oatmeal, green vegetables, potatoes. This is not just war-food propaganda. For these foods should be the fundamental basis of all feeding, in peace as well as in war. We see the six foods raw, we see them cooked, we see them eaten, and finally, an imaginative cinematic trick plants these commodities firmly in our minds, for they are repeated at the end of the film in reverse motion—milk rushes backwards from glass to jug; a cut cabbage uncuts itself and ends up intact; potatoes leap out of the saucepan and join themselves together on a plate. Such trickery is often used simply for its own sake, but in *Six Foods for Fitness* it has a real function to perform. It fixes the list forever in one's mind. Finally, the film is not just a bare set of pictures of foods. The people eating them are directed sensitively and intimately. It is sad to think that this is Ruby Grierson's last film, unless her partly completed film on the children for Canada can be finished.

Village School. Producer: Alex. Shaw. Associate Producer: Arthur Elton. Director: John Eldridge. Camera: Michael Curtis. Commentary: Mrs James.

THIS VIVID and curiously exciting film deals with life in a village school under the double impact of evacuation and the general war situation. Unlike the other films of children made during the first year of this war, *Village School* concentrates on the teacher's point of view, and here it gains

great strength in the fact that it is commented by the teacher who actually appears in the film. She has almost an ideal commentary voice, and has certainly the first female voice to carry a full reel without being monotonous or irritating. The result is that a pleasantly personal quality comes out of the film, while the practical note introduced by the teacher's expert descriptions prevents the scenes of the children lapsing into well-shot sentimentality.

The shape of *Village School* is very simple, being a straightforward description of the activities of a typical day. In addition to scenes of school activities, a good deal of emphasis is laid on the extra problems and responsibilities of teachers as regards the evacuee children. There is one especially good incident dealing with a pair of worn-out boots which is reported by the director and cameraman with a naturalistic ease which is most praiseworthy. The whole treatment of the subject is indeed free from any attempt to get "effects". It is a human story, humanly told. And, quite apart from its non-theatrical value, one may well guess that it would also be highly popular in the public cinemas.

A Job to be Done. Associate Producer: Arthur Elton. Director: Donald Alexander. Photography: Stanley Rodwell.

THIS IS A courageous effort to deal with a complicated and rather technical subject. The object of the film is to describe the method of working of the Schedule of Reserved Occupations and at the same time to detail some of the ways in which the best use can be made of civilian man-power for supply. The sequences therefore deal not only with scenes in employment centres and suchlike offices, but also in factories and in training centres where unskilled workers are turned into skilled engineering craftsmen. The film largely depends on the March of Time technique—that is, mainly commentary, with interpolations by one or two sequences of direct sound. Clearly such a difficult subject could not be successfully treated in any other way—at any rate, in view of its limit of ten minutes; but it is a pity that the commentary is spoken in a harsh and unsympathetic voice. Nevertheless, *A Job to be Done* does succeed in giving a pretty succinct general review of the subject, and not least of its merits is its emphasis on the constant changes and adjustments which have to be made to meet new, and often unforeseeable, conditions of war.

Silage. Production: British Films Ltd. Director: Andrew Buchanan.

MOST OF THE films for the Ministry's non-theatrical scheme, though designed with some specific audience in mind, are suitable for showing almost anywhere. *Silage* is an exception. It is an instructional film designed for farmers and

only suitable for such an audience. Its intention is purely instructional. It tells the farmer how to use home produce for winter cattle feeding instead of imported cattle cake. Such films look easy to make on paper, yet they are often failures, as anyone who has seen the Army Instructional films, for example, the Bren Gun film, will agree. *Silage*, however, is beautifully clear, and is one of the few instructional films which, once seen by an interested audience, will be remembered. The process of making the container for silage is shown in clear and unconfused detail and the film is a blue print for the making of other instructional films of the kind. The argument is clear; the pictures show just what one wants to see and nothing more; the commentary is simple, plain, and tells one just what one wants to know.

Nurse! Production: Pathé.

THIS EFFICIENT film surveys the work being done by women in all branches of the nursing profession in peace and in war. We see schoolgirls doing preliminary training before going to the hospitals. We see classes in the hospitals where they learn the elements of nursing from bandaging, through elementary dietetics, to the all-important business of looking after convalescent patients in their beds. There are brief sequences too of the nurses' job in the operating theatre and in midwifery; and the film ends with the work of a mobile operating theatre and casualty clearing station for use in ever-present emergencies. This sequence at the moment is obviously the one of most immediate interest to everyone. The film also pays tribute to the women who have volunteered to do spare-time nursing jobs to supplement the regular nurses in time of war.

The film is treated, very successfully, in a straightforward newsreel fashion and from this method of presentation gains an actuality which suits the subject well. It might be noted though, that neither the camera work nor the opticals are up to the usual short-film standard.

White Battle Front. A Seven League production. Associate Producer: Basil Wright. Director: Hans Nieter. Camera: B. Browne. Commentary: Arthur Calder Marshall.

WHENEVER ARMIES have fought together in the past disease has battled against both sides. The grim camp followers, Typhus, Typhoid and Influenza have cut down both sides impartially, claiming more victims than cannon or cold steel.

Learning hard lessons from the last war, science is constantly at work discovering and perfecting methods of combating the ills and diseases which are always ready to strike at large bodies of men living under what must always be primitive conditions. *White Battle Front* tells the story of this unceasing war. It tells, too, the story of the

work done to repair the shattered men who return from a further battle front. Dramatically directed by Hans Nieter of *World Window* fame, the film uses every legitimate camera trick to impress and to excite interest. It is no calm and ordered survey but a series of brilliantly lit and carefully planned shots which give a vivid impression of a great and important work.

Mother and Child. Production: Realist Film Unit. Associate Producer: Basil Wright. Direction: Frank Sainsbury. Camera: A. E. Jeakins.

AT THE outbreak of war, when hospitals were being emptied and made ready to receive air-raid casualties and the tendency was for all public health organisation to be subordinated to the imminent demands of the blitzkrieg, one simple fact was forgotten by many a harassed official. However thick the bombs may fall, women will still have babies. Moreover, it is no less important to safeguard the life of the new-born citizen than to succour the air-raid victim. This film demonstrates that the problem has now been tackled and the solution provides the best kind of pro-democratic propaganda. *Mother and Child* uses the experience of a typical family to show how the excellent maternity and child-welfare services which Britain was developing before the war are now going ahead again, and have been adjusted to meet the special wartime needs of mothers.

The Realist Film Unit production team has

made this type of film peculiarly its own and has created high standards of authenticity and production quality which are here well maintained. The film is not primarily designed to report British achievement in the field of social service, but to inform mothers of the facilities available in order that they may take advantage of them. For either purpose it might have been well to include information on the maintenance of maternity services where the social services in general have been disrupted by bombing. Evacuation can never be a complete answer to this problem. Perhaps the Ministry of Information will make a second film on service for mothers unable to leave areas under fire.

Food Convoy. Producer: A. R. Taylor. Direction: John Lewis. Camera: Waxman and Dinsdale. Made at Merton Park Studios.

MADE FROM material shot for the Cadbury rationing film *Bringing it Home*, this production is for the most part a nicely shot picture of the journey of a convoy to a British port. There is no attempt to stage sensational sequences. The normal routine of convoy duty has been rightly regarded by the director as sufficiently engrossing. Thus an air-raid alarm proves to be British Spitfires, and the sequence thereby shows the alertness and efficiency of the escorting destroyers from the point of view of everyday routine. Apart from the opening and closing sequences, which are not at all effective, there is no com-

mentary. The convoy story is told by post-synchronised snatches of conversation on the part of the crews. These, combined with the natural sounds, give a pleasant air of authenticity particularly in the dry comments of a Scotsman on the joys of seafaring life.

Food from the Empire. Direction and Photography: R. Thumwood. Merton Park Studios.

THIS is an unpretentious film describing the contribution to our food supplies being made by the Dominions and Colonies. It is based largely on the familiar trick shot of the shopping basket with inset scenes of the Dominions and Colonies concerned. While there is nothing very striking about this film it does quite competently put across a useful reassurance message.

Coastal Defence. Production: British Movietonews. Commentary: John Snagge.

THIS FILM is about 95 per cent newsreel material, and therefore is to a great extent superficial both in content and continuity. There are several sequences from the excellent item about the bombing of channel convoys which include those famous shots in which the bomb can be actually seen being released from a diving Stuka. For the rest, various shots of artillery, infantry, home guards, mechanised transport and the like are strung together to build up a not unimpressive picture of our preparedness against invasion. It is a pity the commentary could not have been somewhat more informative.

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A MINISTER OF BROADCASTING?

The affinity between broadcasting and films, considered as media for propaganda, has been long apparent. Accordingly we reprint an abstract from Captain Plugge's speech in the House of Commons on the war situation. (From Hansard, August 20th, 1940, by permission of the Controller of H.M.S.O.)

I HAVE often wondered why it is frequently said, and it has been said in this House, that propaganda is not British. I submit to the House that propaganda embodies the fundamental British spirit, since it consists in trying to induce people to do the right thing merely by talking to them and persuading them to do it, against the other method, which is to apply force and inflict bodily injury to make people fall in with your ways. I do not wish, however, to base my remarks on propaganda as such, but I wish simply to limit my criticisms to the means, or absence of means, employed in transporting propaganda. If we review the various events which have occurred since the advent of the Government, and correlate them to propaganda, we can see what effect propaganda has had. Broadcasting has been the principal means. Broadcasting is a new weapon with which we were not faced in the last war. I believe that very few hon. Members in this House realise how weak we are in this respect.

Before the war started, Great Britain had 16 broadcasting stations, of which two were high-powered—by high-powered, I mean stations of 100 kilowatts or more—operating on 12 wave-lengths, of which seven were clear channels, including one long wave. Germany had 40 stations, 10 of which were high-powered, operating on 31 wave-lengths, of which 17 were clear channels, including one long wave-length.

(A clear channel is a channel allotted to a country to itself alone, unshared with anyone, and therefore it is possible for that country to construct a very high-powered station on that channel.) Long wave-lengths are very important in Europe, because they carry very far in daylight, and there are very few to allot. Never has a country been granted more than one long wave (except Russia) at international conferences. Several countries, such as Italy and Switzerland, have never succeeded even in obtaining one.)

When war broke out, Germany maintained all her wave-lengths and stations in operation, whereas we scuttled 10 of our 12 wave-lengths and therefore we had at the beginning of the war 16 stations operating on two wave-lengths with one programme only, as against Germany's 40 stations on 31 wave-lengths.

After the occupation of Poland the forces of the enemy in the æther world increased to 50 stations, of which 11 were high-powered, operating on 40 wave-lengths, 21 of which were clear channels and two were long wave.

After the conquest of Norway and Denmark, Germany increased her æther strength to 68 stations, of which 11 were high-power stations,

operating on 52 wave-lengths, 26 of which were clear channels and four were long wave.

After the conquest of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg the number of stations operated by Germany further increased to 84, 13 of which were high-powered operating 62 wave-lengths with 29 clear wave-lengths. She also increased her long wave channels to six. Up to now the increase of æther power by Germany had been at the expense of the neutrals. By then we had reopened three of our scuttled wave-lengths, and were operating on five wave-lengths. When Germany started to occupy France she further increased her æther power but now at the expense of Allied channels. After the capture of Paris and the French surrender, Germany's æther power increased to 112 stations, of which 24 were high-powered, operating on 82 wave-lengths, of which 37 were clear channels and seven were long wave. At this moment came the entry of Italy into the war, and a further 50 stations on some 20 wave-lengths joined the anti-British brigade.

That is the position in which we find ourselves to-day. How is it possible, however good our propaganda—and I am making no criticism of our type of propaganda—for us to compete with Germany? It is the same thing as trying to carry on business with 16 cargo boats when your enemy possesses 162, most of which are faster, larger, have a bigger cruising range, and cover ten times more routes than your own. We simply do not possess the cargo space to transport our propaganda, however good it may be.

Now, quite apart from the greater advantage which Germany possessed and has now vastly increased in the æther field, we must remember that geographically, apart from the war, England is at a natural disadvantage from an international radio point of view. Great Britain is situated at the end of a Continent and, therefore, 180 degrees of its stations' radiations fall into the Atlantic and only one-half fall on fertile soil. Germany, on the other hand, is situated in the middle of Europe, and all the 360 degrees of her broadcasting waves fall on fertile soil in all directions.

The fact that a country can hear a British station is in itself propaganda, because inhabitants of all countries have got into the habit of judging the power, importance and efficiency of a country by the manner in which they receive that country's broadcasting stations. That is why the Mediterranean is a very bad area for us. There it is practically impossible to receive clearly or with ease any of the British medium-wave

channels. Short waves are received, but there are few instruments in Europe that receive short waves. I estimate that, in France, about one in every 100,000 sets is capable of receiving short waves. It is worrying sometimes to see the confusion that exists about these things. The Minister of Information, as he stated in this House, does not consider himself an expert on broadcasting, and I remember that, when replying to questions about the bad reception of our medium waves in France, he said it was true that medium waves faded but that short waves were well received. That is true, but there are no short-wave receivers. Where you get an audience of 100,000 listening to medium waves you get an audience of only two or three listening to short waves.

I have mentioned the Mediterranean. That sea is far from the United Kingdom, but we possess colonies in the Mediterranean; Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, and we are allied to Egypt. There is no reason why the whole of the Mediterranean should not be covered by British wave-lengths and stations operating thereon. Some ten years ago, I was instrumental in obtaining a British wave-length for Malta, but that wave-length was never utilised, and eventually Germany occupied it, as the station was never built. The same thing applies to the United States. Around the American Continent we have Bermuda, Jamaica and many other Colonies where medium wave-length stations could be established. Some might not reach over the distance in daylight, but at night great areas would be covered. Transmitting after dark can be fruitful, especially to a country like the United States, where there are four standards of time. America understands this position so very well that she has 800 stations operating on the medium wave-length, and 30 alternative programmes in New York alone.

The state of affairs is equally well understood in Canada which has 91 broadcasting stations, and where I had long talks with the Canadian Minister for Broadcasting and the Canadian Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. They both asked me with dismay how it was possible that we allowed the Germans to conquer the whole æther world of Europe without taking the obvious steps. When in America recently, I had the opportunity of talking to many of our friends there. One of them, Senator Pepper, was particularly anxious about our broadcasting situation. He said that broadcasting was of the utmost value because it showed to the masses the degree of a country's efficiency. American people could not come over here to see where our guns were or exactly what we were doing, but they could tune in on their radio sets and hear for themselves each and everyone that we were completely neglecting the most modern and one of the most efficient war weapons.

What is broadcasting? Broadcasting is just the latest and most modern method of travel. It is the travel of the mind without the transport of the body. It is the forerunner of the physical occupation of a country. The conquest by Germany of Austria and Czecho-Slovakia was

greatly helped by the fact that German was understood in those countries. This applied in a lesser degree also to Poland and the Scandinavian countries and Holland, where German is widely understood. It does not apply to France and England where conquest by radio is more difficult. I would point out that Hitler has never bombed a radio station because the most important thing when occupying a country is to seize the broadcasting station. The moment you possess the principal broadcasting station you have greater control of the country than if you were on good terms with the Government itself, because you can instruct all the inhabitants what to do and what not to do, accompanied by the necessary threats. If you were to destroy the broadcasting station it would take six months to build a new one.

In the case of the surrenders of the Dutch Army, the Belgian Army and the French Army, they all happened some 48 hours after the principal broadcasting stations had been occupied by Germany. The influence that can be exercised through a broadcasting station is immense, apart from the fact that while fighting is going on appeals can be made to the soldiers to surrender. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister spoke of attempts that were made by the enemy in the invaded countries on the Continent to cause the soldiers to think they could not fight. That is absolutely the key of the situation. Broadcasting was the method of making them think that they could not continue the fight usefully. We cannot conceive of the power which can be exercised through broadcasting; it is like a person whispering in the ear of all the people all the time.

What is the remedy to be applied in a situation like this? The value of broadcasting is naturally greater at the beginning of a campaign than it is when events such as those we have witnessed have taken place. Nevertheless there remain two or three things which can be done and should be done. We should create in Great Britain a great number of freedom stations. That is a term which I will explain. When a country is conquered and its broadcasting stations are conquered there is no reason why another broadcasting station should not be established across the Channel, manned preferably by the nationals of the conquered country, and if possible with the actual operators of the old stations. The B.B.C. has had the foresight to construct a certain number of stations in case anything might happen to those they already possess. No channel should be allowed to remain silent. Freedom stations should be broadcasting during the whole 24 hours of the day. Two of them should be allotted to Norway, two to Denmark, two to Holland, two to Belgium and probably four or five to France. Our present broadcasts of 15 minutes a time to the inhabitants of the occupied countries are not good enough. It is important to create an audience. I have had a certain amount of experience in creating audiences from one country to another and it is impossible to create a large audience to a broadcasting station unless you broadcast for at least

three or four hours in the language of the country concerned. Supposing I were to tell hon. Members that to-morrow the Norwegian station at Oslo would broadcast every day for 15 minutes in English. Is there anyone here who would tune in regularly to that particular 15 minutes? Could they even find it once? But if that station were giving out continuous broadcasts in English over six hours daily then it is very likely that at certain times many more people would hear them and in that way a large audience might be built up.

It is a feature of broadcasting that the nationality of a broadcasting station has nothing to do with its geographical position, but only with the language it speaks and where it is received. What we have allowed the Germans to do is practically the same as if we had allowed them to set up stations in London, Birmingham, Glasgow and elsewhere. If we had a Dutch station somewhere in the north, the result would be just the same to the Dutch listeners as if the station were at Hilversum, its old situation. The listeners would not be able to tell that it was in a different position.

I was talking just now about the value to an enemy of occupying the broadcasting stations. We talk about the possible invasion of this country. What would be the first thing for the enemy to do? It would be to capture our principal broadcasting stations. We should have either to blow them up and have none ourselves or let the enemy take them. The way to overcome that is to build up all over England some 500 broadcasting stations of very small power, something like 100 to 150 watts, in nearly all the smaller towns and large villages. Such broadcasting stations would not cost much more than £2,000 each. The sets are available in the U.S.A. We could put in 500 operators and they could use all the wave-lengths of Europe, because such small broadcasting stations are not interfered with by distant stations, though they on their part would interfere with the reception over here of broadcasts from distant stations, and in that way would spoil efforts of subversive propaganda. Even if some of these stations had to be destroyed we should retain control of the remaining ones. We have a Minister of Air and a Minister of Aircraft Production; in the æther field we should have a Minister of Broadcasting as well as the Minister of Information. The Minister of Broadcasting would have the duty of establishing and organising the freedom stations, and acquiring the necessary wave-lengths, and all the channels could then be used for propaganda.

If we do not assist the efforts of our Fighting Forces by a powerful broadcast system we place them in the position of men fighting with one arm tied behind their backs. It is said that we should pass to the offensive. We could certainly stage at once an offensive in the æther. We have the means of doing it and we could establish the necessary stations. If the position were reversed, if we disposed of 170 stations and the Germans had only 16 stations, think of the superiority we would possess over them, with their internal dissension, their occupied countries, their various races.

REALIST FILM UNIT LTD.

Films Completed in September

“MOTHER AND CHILD”

“6 FOODS FOR FITNESS”

FOR THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

“IT COMES FROM COAL”

FOR THE BRITISH COMMERCIAL GAS ASSOCIATION



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THE OTHER CINEMA

By R. S. MILES, a Teacher of History at the Wedgwood Institute, Stoke-on-Trent, who is Chairman of the North Staffordshire Teachers' Film Association, and who originated the Stoke-on-Trent Secondary Schools Film Society. This article was written before the publication of the M.O.I. non-theatrical plan.

THERE ARE many people like myself, who, in addition to being interested in the cinema which has its home in palatial "Odeons", "Ritzs", "Regents", etc., are very keen on that branch of the cinema which is to be found in classrooms, clubs, institutes and barrack rooms. The potential audiences here are great in number; their intellectual qualities generally much higher than the norm of heterogeneous cinema audiences and their sense of co-operation for improvement well known. There are no uniformed attendants, tip-up cushioned seats, subdued lights, soft carpets and sugary music. Instead the seats are hard and scrape harshly on the floor; the lighting is crude, revealing and business-like; music is, perhaps, non-existent. The rooms were built without the least conception of the demands of a cinematograph, while the projectors themselves cannot bear comparison with those of a professional cinema. The smaller screen, the less powerful light, the not quite so good sound apparatus (if one is to be had at all, for the majority of sub-standard projectors in use are, as yet, silent), the necessary reel-changing interval almost reproduce the conditions of early cinemas. Then the novelty made people endure discomfort and periods of waiting while reels were changed or film repaired. To-day, luxury and mechanical efficiency go hand in hand, while those people who are interested in the cinema as something more than a vehicle for parading beautiful women and well-groomed men are forced to endure conditions that range from second to thirty-second rate. There are many contributory causes to these conditions—lack of suitable films and lack of co-ordinated effort among others. The whole business is a vicious circle which can perhaps only be broken by the stimulation which would come from co-ordinated effort. This cinema can never hope to compete with the professional one, but there are certain aspects which could be modified to achieve far greater efficiency and power for the sub-standard film movement which, I am convinced, has an increasingly important part to play in modern life. It is a twentieth-century invention eminently suited to twentieth-century needs. I have long advocated standardisation of projectors, planned series of films with the audiences for whom they are made continually in the producers' minds and, for school purposes, a certificate of merit awarded jointly by teachers who are interested in films, other educational experts and film technicians. At present, however, I consider that a great forward step can be made in the intelligent use of the available films if distribution be first unified, then decentralised—a process requiring a large government subsidy or a gift of Nuffield dimensions. The scheme implies collecting under one authority

(The National Cinema Library?) all the films, 16 mm. and less, available for distribution and, from this collection, stocking various local distribution centres throughout the country. These centres would be branches of the Central Library controlled by it and responsible to it.

Thus Westmorland, Devon and Cornwall would have their county film libraries as they now have their county book libraries, and in most cases the library would be in the county town although in others the distribution of population might militate against this.

This system of regional libraries would, then, be roughly based on a county disposition but in some cases, e.g. Lancashire and Yorkshire, there would need to be more than one library. For example:

Birmingham Area

The Regional Office and Library would be in Birmingham which would supply the following towns:—Willenhall, Walsall, Wednesbury, Wolverhampton, Bilston, Tipton, West Bromwich, Dudley, Oldbury, Smethwick, Rowley Regis, Stourbridge, Halesowen. The remainder of Warwickshire would be supplied from Warwick; Worcestershire from Worcester; while Staffordshire might well be supplied from Stoke-on-Trent rather than from Stafford.

Manchester Area

The Regional Office and Library would be in Manchester and would supply Stockport, Salford, Sale, Ashton, Stalybridge, Hyde, Glossop, Oldham, Rochdale, Bolton, Bury, Eccles, Leigh, Middleton, Radcliffe, Farnworth and Heywood. Lancashire would have two more libraries at Liverpool and Preston while in the West Riding, libraries could be established at Wakefield, Sheffield and Leeds.

Geographically there would be very few difficulties and the transport to be utilised could well be the omnibus services which are now almost omnipresent.

The advantages that I claim for this scheme are:—

- (1) Films would be rendered available more frequently because swift transport would be used.
- (2) There would be economy on postage.
- (3) In the present circumstances borrowers would not be disappointed by late deliveries.
- (4) The presence of these libraries in the areas would stimulate interest in sub-standard films, for the following services could then be the more easily supplied:—

(a) Previews of films for intending users.

(b) The formation of Film Societies using the facilities afforded by these libraries.

(c) The provision of lecturers and road shows to those places not possessing a projector

The difficulties, I know, are enormous. Among them, of course, the paramount one is finance for it enters at every turn; in the equipping of the libraries and their maintenance and in the payment of salaries, although I believe that if educational authorities could be brought into active participation in the scheme by the helpful interest of the Board they could provide, without much extra staff and within their own buildings and organisation, the necessary stocking, viewing and clerical facilities.

Other difficulties to be faced are:—

Provision of films and the financial interests of distributing and producing firms. The first could be met by an allocation of films at present in circulation, but much would depend upon the good-will of the various commercial concerns that produce and distribute their own films, e.g. Petroleum Films Bureau and British Commercial Gas Association. Again there would need to be a steady flow of new films and again these concerns would have to be relied upon for support, although they would perhaps welcome a national organisation which would distribute their films. From such Government departments as the Ministry of Information (in war-time) and the G.P.O. (in peace-time) there should be an ample and assured supply. But all this leaves untouched the question of the supply of purely educational films, i.e. specific teaching films. At present the satisfactory ones are very few and it may reasonably be said that only one company (G-B Instructional) has made a consistent effort to produce such, and without having obtained much, if any, financial gain. Such sources as do exist have practically dried up (vide article "Crisis in Production", *Sight and Sound*, Summer, 1940). I wonder if this unification of distributive facilities might be utilised to secure a unification of production of educational films under the ægis of the Board of Education, if not with the support of subsidies from it? After all the Board will have to take a far more active cognisance of the qualities of educational film. One reform which would result from the centralisation of distribution would be the fixing at a uniform level of borrowing charges. At present the anomalies are laughable.

There are the outlines of the problem. To me, as a user of sub-standard films it seems an important one. There are great potential audiences for these films in the country—audiences whose numbers will increase this winter if black-out conditions impose hardships on travelling after dark. The cinema must be taken to these people for with it will go, not only national propaganda to swell the war effort, but intellectual propaganda for those times after the war when, as we hope, a better world will result, with the cinema playing its part in that new order.

Let the Forces, Farmers' Clubs, Gardening Clubs, Women's Institutes and Clubs, Village Institutes, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, Adult Education classes, as well as Schools share the scheme. Let the cinema achieve a greater significance than it has hitherto done.

ROSTER OF SHORT PROPAGANDA FILMS

The list published below represents the fullest roster obtainable of short propaganda films made in Britain during the first year of the war. It also contains certain pre-war films which have been acquired by the Ministry of Information for their non-theatrical programme. Every effort has been taken to make the list as complete and accurate as possible. The dates noted are in each case those of completion or distribution. We should like to express our gratitude to the many firms and organisations who have assisted us in compiling the list, and especially to the Films Division of the Ministry of Information and the Films Committee of the British Council.

ABBREVIATIONS. T: Theatrical Distribution. Non-T: Non-theatrical Distribution. C: Commissioned by the Ministry of Information. *: Included in the Ministry of Information's non-theatrical scheme. †: Completed before the outbreak of war. Figures in brackets at the end of entries refer to the issue of D.N.L. in which the film has been reviewed. The roman figure gives the issue, the ordinary numerals the page.

- *Aircrew. Variable pitch propeller. *Shell*. September, 1940. Non-T. (IX, 12.)
- *All Hands. Anti-gossip. A.T.P. September, 1939. T. and non-T. C.
- Answer, The. Spirit of Britain. *Spectator*. Aug., 1940. T and non-T abroad.
- *Atlantic Patrol. The Canadian Navy on convoy. *National Film Board of Canada*. T and non-T.
- Backyard Front. Dig for Victory. *British Films*. February, 1940. T.
- *Battlefleets of Britain. *March of Time*. T and non-T.
- *Behind the Guns. Munitions. *Merton Park Studios*. June, 1940. T (1,000 copies sent out with newsreel) and non-T. C. (VIII, 12.)
- *Big City. London at war. *Strand Film Co.* July, 1940. T and non-T. C. (VIII, 12.)
- Bringing it Home. Food supplies. *Merton Park Studios* (for Messrs Cadbury). January, 1940. T and non-T abroad. (See also *Food Convoy*.)
- Britain Shoulders Arms. Rebirth of British Army 1918 to 1940. *Paramount*. November, 1939. T. (III, 6.)
- *Britain's Youth. Why Britain is a fit nation. *Strand Film Co.* July, 1940. T and non-T. C. (IX, 13.)
- Britannia is a Woman. Women's war work. *Movietone*. T. (See also *Women in Wartime*.) (VI, 6.)
- British Made. "British Made" is the hallmark of excellence. *Travel and Industrial Development Association*. March, 1940. Non-T and T abroad.
- *Canada at War. *March of Time*. December, 1939. T and non-T. (V, 7.)
- Cargoes. Mediterranean sea routes. *Travel and Industrial Development Association*. February, 1940. T and non-T abroad.
- Carrying On. Railways in Wartime. *British Foundation Pictures*. October 1939. T.
- *Choose Cheese. Food value of cheese. *Realist Film Unit* for the Gas Industry. August, 1940. Non-T. (IX, 12.)
- Circus, The. National Savings. *Merton Park Studios*. January, 1940. T.
- City of Progress. (Non-theatrical version of *The Londoners*.) *Travel and Industrial Development Association*. April, 1940. Non-T abroad.
- Civilian Front. G.B.I. April, 1940. T.
- Daily Bread. (Adaptation of *Fulfilment*.)
- Wheat supplies. *Merton Park Studios*. December, 1939. Non-T in Britain. T and non-T abroad.
- *Dangerous Comment. Anti-gossip. A.T.P. September, 1939. T and non-T. C.
- Do it Now. Wartime precautions for the public. G.P.O. September, 1939. T (1,000 copies). C.
- Empire Round the Atlantic. Atlantic countries. G.B.I. August, 1940. T and non-T.
- Factory Front. Munitions production. G.P.O. October, 1939. T. C.
- *Farm Tractors. Mechanised agriculture. *Shell*. September, 1940. Non-T.
- *Feed the Furnaces. Salvaging scrap metal. *Merton Park Studios*. July, 1940. Non-T.
- First Days, The. London during the first weeks of the war. G.P.O. November, 1939. T. C. (I, 6)
- Fear and Peter Brown. War neurosis. *Spectator*. July, 1940. T. (VIII, 13.)
- *Fighters of the Veldt, The. South Africa's Armed Forces. Made in South Africa. Non-T.
- *Fire. Training and functions of the A.F.S. *British Films*. T and non-T.
- *Food Convoy. (Non-T adaptation of *Bringing it Home*.)
- *From Family to Farm. Turning waste-food into feeding stuffs for animals. *John Page*. May, 1940. Non-T.
- *Front of Steel. Canada's Munitions Drive. *National Film Board of Canada*. T and non-T.
- *Furnaces of Industry. The steel industry. *Merton Park Studios*. 1940. Non-T. C.
- *Green Food for Health. *Realist Film Unit* (for the Gas Industry). August, 1940. Non-T. (IX, 12.)
- Green, The. National Savings. *Merton Park Studios*. May, 1940. Non-T.
- *Harvest Help. Bringing in the harvest. *Merton Park Studios*. August, 1940. Non-T. C.
- Home Front. British democracy. *Co-operative Society of London*. April, 1940. T and non-T. (IV, 7.)
- Home Front. Canada's industrial effort. *National Film Board of Canada*. T and non-T.
- *Into the Blue. Training of airmen. G.B.I. July, 1940. Non-T. C.
- Island People. Survey of life in Britain. *Realist Film Unit*. February, 1940. T abroad. (IV, 6.)
- Italy Beware. Allied Forces in Middle East. *Paramount*. April, 1940. T. (Released abroad as *Drums of the Desert*.) (VII, 7.)
- *It Comes from Coal. Uses of by-products of coal in war and peace. *Realist Film Unit*. September, 1940. Non-T.
- *King's Men, The. A review of the Fighting Forces. *Movietone*. Non-T. C.
- *Letter from Aldershot. The Canadian Expeditionary Force in Britain. *Realist Film Unit* for *The National Film Board of Canada*. T and non-T.
- London River. Import and export. *British Films*. March, 1940. Non-T in Britain, T and non-T abroad.
- *†Londoners, The. The history of London's Government. *Realist Film Unit*, for the Gas Industry. T and non-T. (See also *City of Progress*.)
- *†Medieval Village. Traditional British village life. G.B.I. Non-T.
- *†Men of Africa. Colonial administration. *Strand Film Co.* T and non-T. (VI, 7.)
- *Men of the Lightship. Sinking of the East Dudgeon lightship. G.P.O. July, 1940. T and non-T. (IX, 12.)
- *[Merchant Navy, The.] G.P.O. September, 1940. Non-T. C.
- *†Miss T. Diet and health. G.B.I. for the Electrical Association of Women. Non-T.
- Musical Poster. Anti-gossip. *Travel and Industrial Development Association*. October, 1939. T.
- Nation Springs to Arms, A. Beginning of war and the Army in training. *Movietone*. August, 1940. T.
- New Britain, The. Twenty years of British achievement. *Strand Film Co.* July, 1940. T and non-T. C. (VIII, 13.)
- Nonquassl. African tribal story. *Schauder*. June, 1940. T.
- *66 Northbound. Road transport in wartime. *Spectator*. 1940. Non-T. C.
- *Now You're Talking. Anti-gossip. A.T.P. September, 1939. T and non-T. C.
- On Guard in the Air. Britain's air defences. G.B.I. Feb., 1940. T and non-T abroad.
- *†Plan for Living. What everyone should know about diet. G.B.I. for the Gas Industry. Non-T.
- *Ports. British ports. G.B.I. 1940. Non-T. C.
- *†Protection of Fruit. Instructional film for farmers. *Shell*. Non-T. (II, 12.)
- Raising Air Fighters. Training pilots. *Paramount*. September, 1939. T.
- *Raising Sailors. *Pathé*. Non-T. C.
- *Raising Soldiers. *Movietone*. Non-T. C.
- Raw Material is War Material. Waste paper. *Crichton Film and Radio Publicity*. (For Ministry of Supply.) January, 1940.
- Ring of Steel. British defences. *Paramount*. April, 1940. T.
- Royal Review. The King and his people. *Paramount*. December, 1939. Non-T in Britain. T and non-T abroad.

Sailors without Uniform. British fishermen. *Spectator*. July, 1940. T and non-T abroad.

Save Your Way to Victory. "Lend to defend". April, 1940. Non-T.

*Shipbuilders. The shipyards of the Clyde and the North East Coast. *G.B.I.* August, 1940. Non-T. C.

S.O.S. Lifeboat men. *Eldridge and Curtis*. June, 1940. T and non-T abroad.

*Spring Offensive. Renaissance of British agriculture. *G.P.O.* 1939. Non-T. C.

Squadron 992. The balloon barrage. *G.P.O.* June, 1940. T. C. (V, 6.)

These Children are Safe. Evacuation. *Strand Film Co.* T and non-T. (American version—What of the Children?) (II, 12.)

*They Also Serve. Housewives in war effort. *Realist Film Unit*. July, 1940. T and non-T. C.

Undersea Patrol. Submarines. *Paramount*. February, 1940. T.

*Vital Service. A modern hospital. *Shell*. October, 1939. Non-T. (VII, 6.)

Voice of the Guns. Armaments. *Pathé*. June, 1940. T. (VII, 7.)

War Comes to London. *Movietone*. October, 1939. T and non-T abroad. (III, 6.)

What is Federation? Federal Union. *Spectator*. July, 1940. T. (VIII, 13.)

*What's for Dinner? Casserole cooking. *Realist Film Unit* for the Gas Industry. August, 1940. Non-T. (IX, 12.)

*Women in Wartime. (Non-T version of *Britannia is a Woman*.)

Young Folks Show the Way. School savings. *Movietone*. July, 1940. Non-T.

5-MINUTE FILMS

DISTRIBUTED BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION UP TO THE END OF AUGUST

Title	Completed	Released	Made by
*ALBERT'S SAVINGS (made for National Savings Committee and acquired 12/8/40)	June/40	12/8/40	Merton Park Studios Ltd. (Director: H. Purcell)
*BRITAIN AT BAY	26/7/40	15/8/40	G.P.O. Film Unit (Commentary by J. B. Priestley)
CALL FOR ARMS, A	27/6/40	22/7/40	D. & P. (Director: Brian Desmond Hurst)
FOOD FOR THOUGHT	8/7/40	29/7/40	Ealing Studios (Director: Adrian Brunel)
*MISS GRANT GOES TO THE DOOR ..	2/7/40	5/8/40	D. & P. Studios (Director: B. D. Hurst)
MR BORLAND THINKS AGAIN ..	18/8/40	2/9/40	British Films (Director: Paul Rotha)
*SALVAGE WITH A SMILE	22/7/40	26/8/40	Ealing Studios (Director: Adrian Brunel)
*SEA FORT	26/7/40	19/8/40	Ealing Studios (Director: Ian Dalrymple)
WESTWARD HO! 1940	23/6/40	8/7/40	D. & P. Studios (Director: Thorold Dickinson)

* Also distributed non-theatrically by the M.O.I.

FILMS COMMISSIONED BY THE FILMS DIVISION OF THE M.O.I. FOR DISTRIBUTION UNDER ITS NEW NON-THEATRICAL SCHEME

WORKING TITLE	PRODUCTION UNIT	DIRECTOR	ASSOCIATED PRODUCER
ANTI-AIRCRAFT	G.B. News		
COAL FRONT	G.B.I.	Frank Searle	Bruce Woolfe
COASTAL DEFENCE	Movietone News		
DAY IN A FACTORY, A	Strand Film Co.	Edgar Anstey	Arthur Elton
FOOD FROM THE EMPIRE	Publicity Films	Cecil Musk	Jack Holmes
JOB TO BE DONE, A	Shell Film Unit	Donald Alexander	Arthur Elton
KEEP FIT	G.B.I.	Mary Field	Bruce Woolfe
MOTHER AND CHILD	Realist Film Unit	Frank Sainsbury	Basil Wright
NURSE!	Pathé		
PEOPLE'S HEALTH, THE	G.P.O.	Patrick Jackson	Jack Holmes
RAW MATERIALS	G.-B.I.	Mary Field	Bruce Woolfe
RELIGION AND THE PEOPLE	British Films	Andrew Buchanan	Arthur Elton
SCHOOL SERVICES IN WARTIME	Strand Film Co.	E. H. Carr	Arthur Elton
SILAGE	British Films	Andrew Buchanan	
SIX CIVILIANS	Spectator	Michael Hankinson	Basil Wright
SIX FOODS FOR FITNESS	Realist Film Unit	Ruby Grierson	Basil Wright
TRANSFER OF SKILL	Shell Film Unit	Geoffrey Bell	Arthur Elton
VILLAGE SCHOOL	Strand Film Co.	John Eldridge	Arthur Elton
WAR AND ORDER	G.P.O.	Harry Watt	Jack Holmes
WELFARE OF THE WORKERS	G.P.O.	Humphrey Jennings	Jack Holmes
WHITE BATTLE FRONT	Seven League	Hans Nieter	Basil Wright

FILM SOCIETIES CARRY ON

It takes more than an aerial blitzkrieg to damp down the energies of the Film Society movement. As the Autumn Season begins letters come in from secretaries in all parts of Britain, reporting not merely normal activities but also (in many cases) new schemes of special wartime significance. Several societies for instance are catering specially for the Armed Forces, for refugees, and for various welfare centres. The real social importance of the Movement is finely illustrated by this renewed vitality and will, it is hoped, be rewarded not merely by seasons financially successful but also by an increased recognition, both by the public and by the authorities, of the value of Film Societies to the community.

PROBLEMS

From reports so far received the main problems at present seem to be first, the increasing shortage of new foreign films; secondly, problems of transport; and thirdly, internal disorganisation caused by the fact that key members of many committees are now involved whole time in important war work.

Revivals can help to solve the problems of subject matter, particularly if the programmes are built round specific themes (e.g. "Hitchcock—from Elstree to Hollywood", "Music in Films", "Hollywood Film Comedies", etc.). It may be presumed that under present conditions the big renters will be much more amenable to accepting one-day hires at low rates.

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETIES

The Secretary of the Merseyside Film Institute Society reports:—

"We are arranging a rather ambitious programme for the season. The war has given us opportunities for putting on film shows to audiences (like the Army) who in normal circumstances would not have been able to see or study documentary films.

"An exhibition, in conjunction with the Corporation of Liverpool, on 'The Art of the Cinema—The Film as a Social Factor', is to be held in the Bluecoat Concert Hall from September 23rd to October 5th. The exhibition—of stills and posters—will be split up into sections showing the value of the film in the various spheres of life, viz.: Entertainment, Social Welfare, Education, Science, Industry, Religion, etc. There will be also, it is hoped, a display of equipment both early and modern and for amateurs, and information regarding directors, comparative costs of films and, if possible, diagrams to show the financial tie-up of the British Film and Distributing Industries. During the first week of the exhibition there will be daily shows in the Society's rooms of 16 mm. films, mostly social, documentary and cartoon. We hope to have a historical section of stills from early films. The first Film Show of the season is being held on Wednesday, October 2nd, at the Philharmonic Hall, when the Sacha Guitry film *Ille Etaleit Neuf Celibataires* will be given together with *Forty Million People* and other shorts. We are faced with the problem of late hours so intend having a running buffet at the hall before the show which is timed to end at 9 p.m. It is hoped to continue the Film Shows of outstanding Continental and Documentary films monthly at this hall, also 16 mm. shows monthly in the Society's rooms—the latter being on specialised subjects (e.g. Geography, History, etc.) and a

monthly show of experimental films at a local cinema—probably on a Sunday. The monthly Bulletin has been issued to members throughout the summer and will be continued. Shows have been given for British and for French troops and further projects include shows to refugees, welfare centres and canteens, and to school children."

After a successful annual meeting, the Dundee and St. Andrews Film Society has arranged an extended season of ten performances. The first is on October 13th, the last on March 9th. It is planned to invite members of the Forces to attend performances as guests of the Society.

The Edinburgh Film Guild is planning a varied international film programme for the season. (Details in the next issue of DNL.)

Manchester and Salford have deferred a decision on the autumn season until the problem of cinema hire (arising from the probability of Sunday opening being introduced) has been clarified. In any case a Spring Season is contemplated.

From the Ayrshire Film Society comes news that sub-standard shows are being arranged for local R.A.F. Units, and that a season of at least five normal meetings is being planned, at both branches of the Society. A series of sub-standard sound shows is also being planned.

TWO CONTINENTAL FILMS

AMOK. *French:* From a story by Stefan Zweig. *Director:* Fedor Ozep. *Photography:* Curt Courant. *Sets:* Lazare Meerson. *With:* Marcelle Chantal, Jean Yernel, and V. Inkijonoff.

THE FALL OF A TYRANT. *Czechoslovakian:* From a play by Karel Kapek. *Director:* Hugo Haas. *Photography:* Otto Heller.

The story of *Amok* is set somewhere in the East Indies, and the central situation, which was no doubt thought very daring, is of a wife who, finding herself pregnant by her lover, and hubby coming home, goes to the local doctor for an abortion. He feels a bit insulted and refuses, then falls for her and says he wants to help. But she's insulted by this time, and in a huff goes off to a female unqualified herb expert, who, in spite of her—presumably—extensive experience in this sort of thing, bungles the job completely. Wife snuffs it and doctor, to redeem himself and keep it all a secret from suspicious hubby, who is having her taken to Europe for an autopsy, tips her coffin into the ocean and projects himself after it.

All this has been directed by Ozep with the maximum amount of heavy atmosphere, and long, meaning looks. Ozep, of course, is the

Plans regarding the current season by the Tyneside Film Society are not available at the time of going to press, as the annual meeting does not take place till mid-September, while the Exeter Film Society has lost so much of its key personnel to the Services that its future is at present doubtful.

Belfast reports that arrangements are in progress for a season which will include at least six repertory shows of foreign films and British documentaries. It is also hoped to arrange sub-standard shows and to continue the Society's campaign for a wider use of the film in schools. The "Film Review" is still being published, though necessarily in a smaller format.

IMPORTANT

The attention of all Film Society secretaries is directed to the articles and reviews in this issue dealing with the Ministry of Information Non-theatrical Films. All these are available to Film Societies free of charge on 35 mm. and 16 mm. stock, and are obtainable from The Central Film Library, Imperial Institute, South Kensington, London, S.W.7.

Russian emigré who made *The Living Corpse*, *Yellow Ticket*, *Brothers Karamazov*, and more recently *Dame de Pique* from Pushkin's story. He was always a bit heavy-handed, but sometimes used to get away with it, notably in *Brothers Karamazov*. Here, I'm afraid, the impending doom business is a complete flop.

The Fall of a Tyrant is a much better film, Czechoslovakian but dubbed into English quite successfully. The story, from Kapek's play, is of a European country which its dictator is arming and leading towards war. At the same time, there is a strange cholera plague which strikes down and kills almost every man in it as he passes the age of 40. A poor doctor discovers an effective serum and after proving it publicly, tries to use this power to prevent the war. He is unsuccessful, even when the head of the armaments firm catches the plague, but when the Dictator himself

goes down with it on the day of the declaration of war, the Dictator at last agrees to call the doctor in and the war off. But the doctor is killed by the war-crazy mob on his way to treat the Dictator, and the war is on again. In the end the Dictator dies, the war is lost, the formula of the doctor's serum is found and the country settles happily down to democracy again.

This film is a polished bit of production. It moves along nicely, the acting is all quite competent, and there are several happy touches of direction; notably where, in the interview between doctor and dictator, the camera pans from one's feet to the other's, then from chest to chest, then from face to face.

And yet the final effect of this film, no less than *Amok*, is depressing. Between the two of them we can get a good glimpse of the state of things that has landed us where we are to-day. Both are based on the same paralysing individualist view of life, the old middle-class pre-occupation with personality. In *Amok* this is obvious enough. We're supposed to be mightily interested in the fate of a handful of people none of whom is worth a tinker's curse. A malignant fate has got them by the short hairs and they can do nothing about it except commit suicide or otherwise die in as gentlemanly or ladylike way as possible. This suicide motif is characteristic, as is the fact that throughout the film there is not a single ordinary, decent human being. Everyone is either wrestling with complexes and suppressed desires or is a member of the dangerous, incalculable mob vaguely threatening from below.

It is this same ignorance of and fear of the mob that is the real fault of *Fall of a Tyrant*. The sympathetic liberal mind behind the film, which I take it is probably Kapek's, though firmly opposed to Fascism, has no real understanding of it or of its appeal to the mob. And so the only solution it can offer is really the obverse of the Fascist coin. Instead of a militant dictator driving the people towards war, we are to have a peaceful scientific doctor forcing them into what he considers better ways. The effective power has merely changed hands from one individual to another, and in place of the Fascist bogey we are to have the scientific bogey. And note that the cholera epidemic is quite unexplained: it, like the hand of fate in *Amok*, comes and goes as it pleases and nobody can do anything about it. The mob, too, is incalculable; it whoops for war, murders a harmless man, and whoops again for peace, all for no good reason. And so, in despair, the film turns to the feelings of certain middle-class individuals as a forlorn hope. The doctor doesn't want war, the women don't want war; this is all it can offer us.

This is a philosophy of despair. In the last instance the feelings of individuals don't count very much, it's that mob we've got to get at. Fascism taps its potentialities in a certain limited fashion, but its real untried sources of vitality are still waiting to be used. Once we learn that the mob is by no means incalculable and set about understanding it we'll soon find that democracy doesn't need any *deus ex machina* such as a cholera epidemic to get its effects. And the first essential to understanding is to stop being contemptuous of it.

BOOK REVIEWS

Report by the Advisory Committee of the Scottish Film Council and Scottish Educational Film Association on the General Principles Governing the Production of Educational Films. Price 1/- net

IN THE FOREWORD to this report it is rightly pointed out that although the present time may be thought inopportune for its publication, now more than ever, the education of the children is of paramount importance.

At the Conference which accompanied the annual general meeting of the Scottish Educational Film Association held in Edinburgh on 8th May, 1937, representatives of the film trade were present. They pointed out "that they did not know what the schools wanted, but that if they had an authoritative statement of what was required and would be used they would try to produce it". This report is the answer, and it provides a set of working plans for the educational film producer—detailed sections are devoted to form, length, content, titles, maps, diagrams, teaching notes. General sections deal with "when is the making of an educational film justified", "The relation of teacher and film", "the relation of film and curriculum", etc.

Apart from these considerations there are 25 pages of lists of subjects for films which have been drawn up by specialist panels working with the responses of 600 teachers to a carefully considered circular letter.

The amateur is recognised as being in a position to contribute films of great value, for he can experiment with methods of production which are too revolutionary to be adopted in orthodox work before they have proved themselves. It is suggested that as he is not compelled to show profit on his production, and is therefore not dependent on securing a wide market, he may most usefully turn his attention to films of more specialised and limited appeal than those listed.

A most useful bibliography of books, reports and articles on visual education occupies the last nine pages.

The world which glints through this report is one of hard material fact. If the findings be adopted in a narrow-spirited manner the child will still have to discover the newer and grander syntheses resulting from advances in biology and atomic physics in the same fragmentary way most of us come upon the new outlook.

The Assessment of Educational Films. Published by the Scottish Council for Research in Education. Price 1s.

IN SCOTLAND in December, 1930, the Executive Committee of the Scottish Council for Research in Education set up a sub-committee on visual aids in education "to explore the possibilities in regard to the use of all forms of, and appliances for, visual illustration in schools" . . . The present publication is one outcome of the Committee's work.

"Childhood has its own ways of seeing" (Rousseau) is the guiding principle behind the approach and the general outlook is defined in these words: "The task of education is not merely to adjust the child to his physical environment but likewise to acculture him to the spiritual resources of mankind—religion, art and literature, the creation of which is essentially a human achievement."

The Committee first set about devising a teacher's appraisal form. This necessitated a knowledge of pupils' reactions to films, and led to a pupil's appraisal form. A summary form was later introduced as a means of collating pupils' responses. After sufficient experience of the use of these forms had been gained it was thought advisable to enunciate the general principles derived from the investigations. These are formulated in the final section of the book which is a concise report upon an inspired yet businesslike job of work.

The appendices included are: Pupil's Appraisal Form, Instructions to teachers and Summary of Pupil's Appraisal.

Using School Projectors. Published by *The British Film Institute*; price one shilling.

Starting with a short account of the theory of projection behind the diascope and episcopes the manual proceeds to a description of the mechanism of the silent cine projector. Additions necessary for the reproduction of sound, viz., sound track, scanning system and smoothing system are simply and clearly explained. The second section deals with projection practice, preparation of the projection room and care of projectors. Under Section III a number of special problems and emergencies receive attention, e.g., reverberance; open electric circuits; shutter ghost; film breakage, etc. The three final pages are devoted to listing the libraries from which films may be borrowed or hired. A great deal is covered in the 40 pages of this manual, yet all of it is adequately treated and excellently illustrated.

Choosing School Projectors. Published by *The British Film Institute*; price sixpence.

Besides cine projectors the present publication covers other projection apparatus including the standard lantern, episcopes, and epidiascopes. Sections II and VI deal most competently with practical problems, e.g., light output of cine projectors, range of lenses, screen surfaces and size of screen, etc. Under Section III 38 types and makes of silent projectors and 35 sound projectors are listed. Optical aids in the form of film strip projectors, lantern slide projectors, episcopes and epidiascopes are also catalogued. Section V provides information on film libraries from which films may be borrowed or hired.

FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H. A hire charge is made. F. Free distribution. Sd. Sound. St. Silent.

Association of Scientific Workers, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

Austin Film Library. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. Available only from the *Educational Films Bureau*, Tring, Herts. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

British Commercial Gas Association, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

British Council Film Department, 25 Savile Row, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1940. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses of 100 sound and silent documentary films.

British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, W.C.1. (a) *National Film Library*. An important collection of documentary and other films. Available only to full members of B.F.I. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (b) *Some British and Foreign Documentary and other Short Films*. A general list of films and sources. (c) *Early Films*. Films 1896-1934 still available in Britain.

Coal Utilisation Joint Council, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Crookes' Laboratories, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Dartington Hall Film Unit, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

Educational Films Bureau, Tring, Herts. A

selection of all types of film. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Educational General Services, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

Electrical Development Association, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available only through members of the Association, 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Empire Film Library, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Films primarily of Empire interest. With a useful subject index. 16 mm. & a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Ensign Film Library, 88-89 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Wide selection of all types of films including fiction, comedies, documentaries, films of geography, animal life, industry. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. & a few Sd. H.

Film Centre, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vibratoires*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

Ford Film Library, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Gaumont-British Equipments, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

G.P.O. Film Library, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Kodak, Ltd., Kingsway, W.C.2. (a) *Kodascope Library*. Instructional, documentary, feature, western, comedy. Strong on early American comedies. 16 mm. & 8 mm. St. H. (A separate *List of Educational Films*, extracted from the above, is also published. A number of films have teaching notes.) (b) *Medical Film Library*. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

documentaries such as Marion Grierson's *For All Eternity*, and one or two *Secrets of Life* and travelogues.

Most of the films are 16 mm. sound. But there is also a comprehensive section of 16 mm. silent films, and in many cases teaching and lecture notes are available. Some thirty films are also supplied on 35 mm. sound. There are also a number of sound recordings of hymns, prayers, etc., so that a complete religious service can be built up from the catalogue. Specimen services are given.

The latest additions to the catalogue include three 16 mm. sound films, *The Spirit of England*, *Ripe Earth* and *The Rich Young Ruler*; and 16 mm. silents on *Baffin Land*, *Thibet*, and *India*.

March of Time, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Inside Nazi Germany*, *New Schools for Old*, *America Thinks it Over*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

Mathematical Films. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd., Trafford Park, Manchester 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

Pathescope, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Petroleum Films Bureau, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Twenty technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Religious Film Library, 104 High Holborn, W.C.1. Films of religious and temperance appeal, also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Scottish Central Film Library, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Sound-Film Services, 10 Park Place, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work* and Pollard's *Dragon of Wales*. *Rome* and *Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

Southern Railway, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South African Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

Strand Film Company, 5A Upper St. Martin's Lane, W.C.2. Eleven films available for non-theatrical distribution including *Aerial Milestones*, *Chapter and Verse*, *Give the Kids a Break*, and a number of others of Empire and general interest, including 3 silent Airways films. Mostly 35 mm. Sd. A few 16 mm. St. F.

Wallace Heaton, Ltd., 127 New Bond Street, W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts. 9.5 mm. catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Workers' Film Association, 145 Wardour Street, W.1. Films of democratic and co-operative interest. Notes and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

CATALOGUE OF THE MONTH

Religious Film Library. 104 High Holborn, London, W.C.1.

The films listed here are designed for use in Religious Film Services—"to supplement or reinforce the spoken word"—or for general religious instructional purposes. But the preface to the catalogue also points out that churches which own or can borrow projectors can do much good work in reception areas, camps and hospitals. Various types of films are available. There are screen versions of Tolstoy's short stories (*Where Love is God Is* and *What Men Live By*), made by G.B.I. There are one or two feature films such as *Turn of the Tide* and *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*. There are also a number of moral tales, some interest films (*Symphonies in Stone*, for instance), one or two

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